

# Project Proposal

**Proposal Title:** Swasey Wildlife and Hazardous Fuels Phase 1

**Proposal Number:** 1396

**DWR Region:** Southeastern Region

**Lead Agency:** USFS

**County:** Emery

**Project Manager:** Daron Reynolds

**PM Phone:** 4356133717

**Regional Priority:** Within Focus Area

**Project Type:** Terrestrial Habitat

**Proposed Start Date:** 3/1/2009

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**Project Location:** Treatment area is located just west of Joes valley Reservoir.

**Project Description:** Reduce the densities of pinyon/juniper in sagebrush openings, around ponderosa pines, and cottonwoods on 1,600 acres in Joes Valley.

**Description of Problem/Need:** Across the West, junipers have expanded their historical range in the years since European settlement, especially into sagebrush-grass communities below areas of traditional pinyon-juniper. Overgrazing, fire suppression, and climatic change have been identified as potential causes of juniper invasion. In the absence of fire or other disturbances, trees eventually dominate the site and crowd out herbaceous and shrub species. This treatment will remove 90% of the encroaching juniper and increase the native grasses and forbs.

Native Ponderosa Pine stands in the Joes Valley Reservoir area have several basal fire scars. These scars are common on the thick-barked stems in old-growth ponderosa pine forests. Uncontrolled fire was common before European colonization. These surface fires consumed branches, fallen trees, understory vegetation, and some living trees. The fires burned from 1 to 47 years apart, with most at 5- to 20-year intervals. Low-intensity fires kept many pine forests open and park like. Due to fire suppression fuels have been allowed to build up under these ponderosa pine stands making them more susceptible to stand replacing fire.

**Objectives:** The Ferron-Price District Ranger is proposing a mechanical treatment of approximately 8252 acres of pinyon/juniper encroachment into sagebrush steppe, ponderosa pine and cottonwood vegetation types. The treatment is designed to reduce the densities of pinyon/juniper in sagebrush openings as well as in and around ponderosa pine and cottonwood. Some of the serviceberry and other shrub species are too tall which makes them unavailable for browse for mule deer and Rocky Mountain elk, the treatment would provide improved transitional as well as winter range for deer and elk by reducing the height of this brush and to stimulate sprouting. The project will be completed in 5 Phases each phase consisting of about 1,600 acres.

- A need to restore winter and transition range for mule deer and rocky mountain elk.
- A need to restore traditional as well as current sage grouse habitat in the Joe's Valley Watershed area.
- A need to restore cottonwood within the Joe's Valley watershed Area.
- A need to reduce the fire regime condition class from moderate (2) to low (1).
- A need to restore the role of fire in the ponderosa pine stands

**Relevance to Strategic Plans:** The Manti-La Sal National Forest and UPCD has accomplished the 4500 acre Black Dragon project which is adjacent to this project. The Forest Service will be implementing an 805 acre project called Middle Mountain which is also adjacent to this project. The state of Utah has designated Joe's Valley/Reeder subdivision communities as a "Community at Risk" in regards to catastrophic fire. The state of Utah has recently completed a fuels reduction project in Reeder Sub-division; this project will enhance the defensible space in this community. In addition this will also help protect one of the very few stands of mature ponderosa pine stands on the Manti-La Sal National Forest.

Project area is located in the WAP Mountain shrub and sagebrush steppe focus areas.

**Potential Risks:** Reduction in sagebrush, Ponderosa Pine, and Cottonwood dependent species. Increase risk of catastrophic fire in the Joe's Valley/Reeder subdivision communities if project not completed.

**Proposed Methods:** This project is planned as a multi-year project to remove pinyon-juniper and stimulate regrowth on mountain browse on 8,252 acres in 5 different phases. Phase I will consist of treating 1,600 acres using several tracked Bobcat skid-steer with mastication heads to mulch the P-J and partially mulch serviceberry and mountain mahogany. Approximately 539 acres will utilize the bullhog, 737 acres will utilize bullhog and hand thinning along riparian areas, and 346 acres will utilize hand thinning and burning. The treatment will remove 90% of the encroaching juniper and increase the native grasses and forbs. After the mulching is finished in each phase, approximately 40 percent of the treated acres (pine area) may be burned upon completion of mechanical treatment to consume branches, fallen trees, and the understory vegetation.

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**Shapefile Name:** HPD 2010\GIS Shape Files - Proposals\SER\1396.shp

**Seed Source:**

**UPCD Reg Team Coord Date:** 1/20/2009

**Proposed NEPA Action:**

**Proposed Arch Action:**

Monday, March 16, 2009 11:38:51 AM

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☒ **Vegetation Monitoring**      ☐ **Wildlife Monitoring**

**Monitoring Information:** Photo points will be established to monitor pre and post treatment vegetation. The Range Trend study, North Horn Rock Canyon 16C-22, is located on the boundary of the Phase 5 polygon.

**Grazing Management:** Portions of this project falls with the Horn Mountain Cattle and Horse allotment. It is not planned to be rested from grazing following the treatment and a new grazing plan is not planned on being developed due to low use, very few water sources in the area, by domestic cattle.

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## SPECIES BENEFITING

Greater Sage-grouse	Elk	Mule Deer
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## LAND OWNERSHIP

Owner	Acres
USFS	1600
<b>Total</b>	<b>1600</b>

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## PROPOSED FUNDING

Source	Amount Requested	Date Approved	Amount Approved
Unfunded Balance	\$75,000.00		\$0.00
USFS	\$147,731.00		\$0.00
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$222,731.00</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>

## PROPOSED BUDGET

Item	Description	DWR Account	Partner Contrib.
Personal Services	Seasonals to run the bobcats	\$45,000.00	\$77,731.00
Materials and Supplies	Fuel, bobcat maintenance,	\$30,000.00	\$70,000.00
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$75,000.00</b>	<b>\$147,731.00</b>

## Project Map:



# Swasey Bullhog

